

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 AID-05

/067 W

-----074448 122220Z /62

O R 122130Z OCT 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4138

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRASILIA 8328

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, PINT, BR

SUBJ: OUSTER OF ARMY MINISTER FROTA -- IMMEDIATE POLITICAL

BACKGROUND

REF: BRASILIA 8316

1. ALONG WITH FACTORS AT THIS EARLY POINT KNOWN ONLY TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, WE BELIEVE FROTA'S OUSTER WAS AT LEAST PARTIALLY PROMPTED BY THE DECISION OF A HARDCORE RIGHTWING GROUP OF TEN ARENA DEPUTIES TO BRING HIS LATENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY INTO THE OPEN THROUGH A SERIES OF SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS OVER THE LAST 7-10 DAYS. THE TEN DEPUTIES ALSO PROMISED THAT FROTA WOULD SOON SPEAK OUT ON BRAZILIAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, PARTICULARLY LEGISLATIVE POWER AND THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY. THEIR ACTION COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT FROTA'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT.

2. ON OCTOBER 7, ARENA VICE LEADER DEPUTY MARCELO LINHARES BROUGHT MATTERS TO A HEAD BY ACCUSING ARENA'S LEADERSHIP OF TRYING TO MINIMIZE THE INFLUENCE OF THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND (READ: FROTA AND HIS MILITARY SUPPORTERS) IN THE PRESIDENT'S SELECTION OF HIS SECESSOR. AMIND RUMORS

HE WOULD BE CENSURED, LINHARES MET WITH CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES LEADERSHIP IN EMERGENCY SESSION OCTOBER 10 AND EMERGED APPARENTLY UNSCATHED AFTER EXPLAINING HIS STATEMENT TO THE LEADERSHIP. HARDLINER ARENA CHAMBER LEADER JOSE BONIFACIO ISSUED A STATEMENT AFTER THE MEETING SAYING THAT ARENA CHAMBER LEADERS (INCLUDING LINHARES) UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTED GEISEL'S ROLE IN THE CHOICE OF A SUCCESSOR. THIS TRANSPARENT ATTEMPT TO BURY THE ISSUE HAS OBVIOUSLY HAD LITTLE IF ANY EFFECT ON EVENTS. BONIFACIO HAD ADMITTED TO PRESS DAY BEFORE THAT IT WOULD BE "VIRTUAL SUICIDE" FOR ARENA TO ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE ARMED FORCES FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE SUCCESSION PROCESS.

3. THE WAR OF NERVES CONTINUED OCTOBER 10 WHEN FROTA SUPPORTER DEPUTY FRANCISCO ROLLEMBERG TOLD THE PRESS THAT BY THE END OF THIS WEEK MILITARY PERSONALITIES INCLUDING EX-MINISTERS, WOULD ISSUE A MANIFESTO DEFENDING THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN MAINTAINING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REVOLUTION. THE MANIFESTO WOULD PRESUMABLY EMBRACE PRINCIPLES THAT FROTA ALSO ACCEPTS, AND MAY THEREBY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO REINFORCE HIS POLITICAL POSITION.

4. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT EVER SINCE FROTA TOOK OFFICE IN 1974, RELATIONS BETWEEN HIM AND THE PRESIDENT HAVE BEEN FREQUENTLY MARKED BY FRICTION, CONFRONTATIONS AND SEMI-CONFRONTATIONS. THIS CHARACTERIZATION OF THEIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RELATIONSHIP IS AMPLY SUPPORTED BY FROTA'S STATEMENT REPORTED SEPTEL. FROTA HAS ALSO, OF COURSE, ALWAYS BEEN NEGATIVE TOWARDS AND SUSPICIOUS OF CIVIL HOUSEHOLD CHIEF GOLBERY.

5. WHATEVER THE PROXIMATE CAUSE OF THE ABRUPTNESS OF FROTA'S OUSTER -- WHETHER HE WAS IN FACT ABOUT TO TAKE A NEW POLITICAL OR OTHER INITIATIVE-- WE DO NOT AT THIS POINT KNOW. THE PICTURE WILL BECOME CLEARER OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS. MEANWHILE, WE WILL BE SUBMITTING A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF TODAY'S EVENTS.
CRIMMINS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, REMOVAL FROM OFFICE, PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION, ELECTION CANDIDATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Format: TEL
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771072/aaaacjaw.tel
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Litigation History:
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: OUSTER OF ARMY MINISTER FROTA -- IMMEDIATE POLITICAL BACKGROUND
TAGS: MILI, PINT, PGOV, BR, ARENA, (FROTA, SYLVIO COUTO COELHO DA)
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